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Internet Archive Launches TV News

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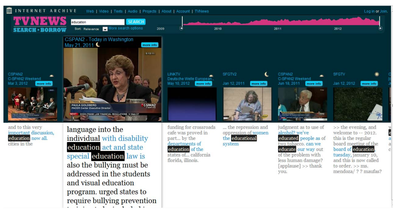
By Anastasia Salter

The Internet Archive just launched a new archive of TV News Search & Borrow that promises to be a valuable tool for researchers both in and out of the classroom. At launch, the collection has over 350,000 broadcasts, and offers the ambitious promise of continuous updates to come. The archive is well-timed for explorations of discourse in the ongoing election, but it has potential for classroom and research use beyond political science and cultural studies.



You may have already used some of the fantastic resources from the Internet Archive, including the awesome power of the Wayback Machine to reveal both old web sites and ancient "blink" tag filled pages. Kathleen Fitzpatrick looked at one of their projects in Books in Browsers. The addition of TV News to this collective is another step in offering greater accessibility to researching ephemeral material, although the "borrow broadcast" option of a DVD loan for full programs is likely too expensive and inconvenient for most classroom uses.

Just as Google Books Ngrams lets us trace on a broad scale the popularity of certain words and topics over time in print, the TV News timeline visualizes the frequency of topics in archived broadcasts and offers another window into popular discourse (check out the spikes in mentions of apocalypse, for instance). Options to narrow searches by network or show, from The Colbert Report and The Daily Show to less serious broadcasts, are also valuable for media studies.

I'll be using TV News Search & Broadcast as another tool for expanding debates and awareness of the conversations surrounding topics in my courses this semester. Have you checked out TV News or other archives for the classroom?

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